

SANTA FE RAIL TRAIL CONNECTIONS ALTA VISTA TO PEN RD; MONTEREY LINK

Meeting Summary

Public Involvement Meeting #2 - Tuesday, May 19, 2015

Purpose

Public Involvement Meeting #2 for the Santa Fe Rail Trail Connections on Tuesday May 19, 2015 presented the proposed trail alignment plans, intersection designs, and project details to the public and served as a venue to collect public input prior to final design and construction. The Rail Trail Connections project areas consisted of a ca. 1,900 lf trail segment between Alta Vista to the existing trail at Pen Rd., including intersections at Alta Vista and Cordova Road, and a ca. 160 lf segment connecting the Rail Trail to the Casa Linda neighborhood at Monterey Drive. Project boards with basic project information (Context Map w/ Project Area, Rail Trail – Existing Conditions Information, Site Plan – Proposed, Site Sections – Proposed, Intersection Plans: Cordova + Alta Vista) were on display during the meeting. A public question and answer session followed a brief informal project introduction by the City's Project Manager.

Meeting Summary

The second public involvement meeting for the Santa Fe Rail Trail Connections project was held at the Railyard Community Room on Tuesday, May 19, 2015 between 5:30 and 6:30 pm. There were 23 individuals signed in, with an estimated 33 people attending. Project team members present included: City of Santa Fe (Leroy Pacheco, Project Manager), HDR (Angela Valdez), design office (Claudia Horn, Patrick Sinnott).

The meeting was organized as an open house (ca. 10 minutes) followed by a presentation (ca. 20 minutes), and question and answer session (ca. 35 minutes).

Leroy Pacheco briefly introduced members of the design team (HDR, design office) and provided an overview of the project's history, design parameters, and the overall objective of connectivity with the existing trails system. The project purpose is to complete missing links along the Rail Trail between Alta Vista and Pen Road and between the Rail Trail and the Casa Linda neighborhood. The intention is to install a multi-use urban trail and pedestrian friendly crossings at busy roadways. The trail will be a 10 foot wide concrete trail within the Rail Road right-of-way on the east side of the South Capitol Rail Runner Station.

The trail crossings at Cordova Road and at Alta Vista St. will be ADA accessible and accommodate bicycles and pedestrians. The Pen Road intersection will be necked down and corresponding bump-outs will allow for landscaped areas and formalized parallel parking. Plants will be hand watered by City trucks and will also rely on captured stormwater runoff via curb cuts in the bump-out locations. The design also calls for a gentler curve at the north end of Pen Road and widening the existing trail at the existing Rail Trail junction near the Chevron station. At the South Capitol Station, separate ramps as requested by NMDOT will minimize conflict with train passengers and users of the Rail Trail.

The Monterey link will include chainlink fencing removal and tree removal within the easement. Either a concrete or asphalt paved trail connection will be installed. The City is working on licensing the easement from Santa Fe Public Schools.

Public Comments Summary

Public comments were collected through written comment forms, emails, and by documenting the question and answer session at the public meeting. Overall, meeting attendees responded positively to the trail connection improvements and the proposed designs.

Primary concerns of meeting attendees included issues related to tree removal at the Monterey link, slowing bicycle traffic near the South Capitol Station, and preserving a dedicated bicycle lane along Alta Vista. Suggestions from the public included narrowing the pedestrian medians and installing crosswalk markings or rumble strips near pedestrian walkway + Rail Trail intersections near the South Capitol Station.

Some of the primary issues outlined by those who gave open comments were:

- questions / comments on the link between Monterey and the rail trail concerning safety and design
- comments / suggestions on design details for improvements at roadway intersections and increasing safety at station intersections
- questions / comments about the Pen Road area improvements

Meeting Advertisement

The meeting was advertised according to City of Santa Fe guidelines as follows:

15 days in advance:

Email: to Santa Fe City Council, Santa Fe MPO staff, Santa Fe City Parks Division, BTAC members, NMDOT representatives, previous meeting attendees, SF Pedestrian Master Plan working group members, interested organizations + trail advocates, interested individuals and neighborhood associations (city wide)

Postcards: to property owners within 300' of project boundaries, neighborhood associations within 300' of project boundary

Posters: (1) 4'x5' City of Santa Fe Notification Boards at the intersection of Rail Trail and Alta Vista
(1) 4'x5' City of Santa Fe Notification Board at the South Capitol Rail Runner Station
(1) 4'x5' City of Santa Fe Notification Board along Pen Road
(1) 4'x5' City of Santa Fe Notification Board along the Rail Trail at the Monterey connection

One week in advance:

Email: to Santa Fe City Council, Santa Fe MPO staff, Santa Fe City Parks Division, BTAC members, NMDOT representatives, previous meeting attendees, SF Pedestrian Master Plan working group members, interested organizations + trail advocates, interested individuals and neighborhood associations (city wide)

One day in advance:

Email: to Santa Fe City Council, Santa Fe MPO staff, Santa Fe City Parks Division, BTAC members, NMDOT representatives, previous meeting attendees, SF Pedestrian Master Plan working group members, interested organizations + trail advocates, interested individuals and neighborhood associations (city wide)

Comments + Suggestions – from the Public

Following are comments / suggestions from the public. These comments were collected in the following manner:

- Question & Answer Session (recorded during the public meeting)
- Written comments on Comment Sheets (collected on 5/19/2015)
- Email correspondence (collected until 5/22/2015)

QUESTION + ANSWER SESSION RECORD (FROM PUBLIC MEETING: May 19, 2015)

During the presentation there were concerns about trail details at intersections, both pedestrian and vehicular. Members of the audience expressed concerns how intersections would be addressed due to increased pedestrian / bicyclist traffic along the Rail Trail.

The regular text is a record of comments and questions from the public. Italicized text is a record of responses from the design team. The record is summarized, not transcribed verbatim.

Questions and Answer Session

Would the area at the end of Pen Road be taken out?

-Some of the trail will be salvaged but that area of the trail will be widened to 8'- 10'. It depends on available real estate. It is not ideal to squeeze down below 10' wide but it will depend on what fits.

Will anything be done for cyclists crossing the railroad tracks?

-Rail crossings are not part of this project but NMDOT will work on retrofitting intersections utilizing the department's 'safety money,' after the City's project is complete. There will be gates and markings added to the Alta Vista trail crossing - NMDOT.

Does SFPS own all the easements in that area?

- I can't speak to all easements but they were likely installed to allow children access to schools.

Will trees be removed within the pathway? Can the big tree on the west side be considered for keeping?

-That tree will likely need to be removed but we will work with designers and consider property owners needs when eliminating trees. The path needs to be ADA compliant, which will drive the removal of trees.

What will happen to the irrigation and berm in that area?

- The trail will be ADA so the berm and such will need to be adjusted as required. Repairs to the irrigation system due to construction at the juncture will be done as part of the project.

There is a major impact to the neighborhood and a sign at that entrance would have been helpful. Consider that there may need to be a new stop sign in the area of Monterey if there is increased pedestrian/bicyclist traffic.

- A point of clarification, the trail will be a 6' not 8' wide paved trail.

I am concerned about the speed of bike traffic coming off the Rail Trail into the easement. A soft pavement or leaving the trees could help with that bicycle traffic calming. A small bump-out extension at the entrance could be helpful too. A couple feet with a rounded curb may not inconvenience many vehicles.

On the Rail Trail: On Alta Vista and Cordova the trail comes to the curb and then curves to the ADA ramp. The ADA ramps should align with trail, not curve around to it. Also the ADA ramp should be 10' to match the trail.

Please keep medians on Alta Vista narrow because there are bike lanes that will be impacted.

-Good comments. A reduced bike lane may be necessary. The road is plenty wide for two travel lanes, an 8 ft. median and bike lanes.

Eliminating the nose on the Alta Vista east side would allow bikes to take a left.

- The nose provides protection for pedestrians at the median refuge. Bikes should slow down at this intersection.

Please don't think about the bike lanes as a left turn lane onto the Rail Trail. We can narrow the medians to have a through bike lane.

- I would disagree with you. There are satisfactory bike lanes in this neck down area. It is desirable to have bike traffic slow down in this area. The nose on the median helps to protect pedestrians. The median could be narrowed down a little bit but I don't know if we need dedicated wide bike lanes in this narrow area. Keep in mind that the gates go down and that makes it a very atypical intersection.

Please put a crosswalk crossing on the trail at the alignment with the ramp.

-Good comment. NMDOT would also like that. Rumble strips at the trail near the station can also help slow bike traffic.

Would there be a bike lane along Monterey Drive in order to connect to the Acequia trail?

-Directional signage will provide some help/direction. Baca is a good intersection for crossing. Wayfinding to this location will be considered.

There is an 8' easement around the school to the northeast that could be used for a connecting trail.

-This is school property and not in the scope of the project.

There is not any sidewalk plans on the east side of Pen Road?

-This is not part of the scope of the project. It would likely be developed as blocks are revitalized. The Rail Trail is a multi-use ped/bike path.

Is there an approximate schedule set up?

-Design is scheduled to be done within 6-8 weeks. Then ADA and historic needs to approve. There are additional constraints with rail approval so we are looking at construction begin at the end of 2015. The project will be bid out.

Is this bond money?

- It is 2012 bond money

A sign near the small easement will be helpful for directing people around from a potential underpass. There needs to be a discussion about access to the Acequia Trail from Baca Street.

Crossing at Baca is very scary and much more narrow than Alta Vista.

- Keep in mind that you are entitled to the center of the lane. Baca is a shared use roadway.

I am glad you are going to beautify that section along Pen Road. My concern is the homeless people in the area. And I am not sure if that would encourage or discourage them.

- I am not sure if the project would increase or decrease homelessness in the area.

Will there be any waste receptacles?

-There could be opportunities for signage and receptacles in strategic locations. There could also be opportunities for the public to adopt a median. This is a good opportunity for neighbors.

Right now there are Coates Trees trucks parked along Pen Road, front in. Is this Coates property?

-That area is not Coates, it is Rail Bureau property. They will not be able to park all over the place. Curb and gutter will define edge for parallel parking.

I am concerned about arrival on the Rail Trail at Alta Vista headed north. People can be a conflict as drivers turn right from the State parking lot. Maybe you can neck down the exit. It is an area that could be a conflict for trail users.

Will it still be a legal to turn left onto Pen Road from Cordova.

-Yes

SUGGESTIONS FROM COMMENT BOX

Written comments collected on or after the meeting on comment sheets are as follows:

1. Future consideration - widen sidewalk south of Alta Vista between State parking lot and RR. Lots of pedestrian and bikes access Rail Trail + Rail Runner through this short, narrow route. Thanks.

SUGGESTIONS FROM EMAILS

Written comments collected on or after the meeting by email are as follows:

1. email 05/21/2015

Thank you for including me on these meeting notifications and receiving my input. Unfortunately these public meetings seem to be my only chance to provide any input on trail and road projects, even though the project concepts are the result of being scoped by myself in order to be included in the Metropolitan Bicycle Master Plan. As someone who has worked in this specific field full-time for a dozen years and is under contract with the city to provide this kind of assistance, I am very frustrated with trying to provide any significant level of input in the very limited context of a public meeting for a project that has already been designed.

I would be very happy to be involved earlier on any of these projects. It is not very useful to wait until a near final design is in place before even having a look, and it certainly precludes any kind of creative conversation that could help steer projects before they go too far astray, and especially before commitments are made with partners that compromise the original intent of the projects and thus the quality of the designs that are being produced.

An example is the current Rail Trail project. I would like to have had a creative conversation about how to have bike lanes on roads that need them (Alta Vista St.) and how to facilitate left turns by bicyclists onto the Rail Trail, while still providing protected crosswalks where trails meet roads. What happened on Tuesday was not a conversation but simply the defense of a design.

Nor am I very pleased with the prospect that the City will use trail money to rebuild S Capital Station ramps in order to shoe-horn the Rail Trail against the S Capital complex driveway. This was not a conversation that we could have on Tuesday: Did you know that when the train station was built, these ramps had been re-designed specifically in order to accommodate the Rail Trail "some day"? This was a request from me, as NMDOT's BPE Coordinator, and the result was wider, better ramps for train users. Now, the prospective conflicts between trail traffic (bicyclists and pedestrians) and train users (bicyclists and pedestrians) are over-stated and under-studied. There are far better ways to deal with these conflicts, such as providing a staircase in line with the crosswalk, to handle 90+% of pedestrian traffic with minimized conflicts with trail users, while still meeting ADA via the existing ramps. Using trail funds to rebuild these ramps back into something resembling the originally designed, inferior, narrower ramps, is bad for train users as well as trail users, and especially for those that are using both the trail and the train.

Tim Rogers *Trails Program Manager Santa Fe Conservation Trust*

END OF NOTES

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SANTA FE RAIL TRAIL CONNECTIONS PUBLIC INPUT MEETING

May 19, 2015

*please print

Name	Address	Email or Contact Number	Affiliation (Local Resident, Organization, Other)	How did you hear about this project? (Poster, Flyer, Email, Friend, Other)	Would you like to be added to our contact list?
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May 19, 2015

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